

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

What is Bipolar Disorder in Adults?¹

What is Bipolar Disorder or Manic-Depression?

Frequently, the names are used interchangeably. With the brain disorder or mental illness called Bipolar Disorder we experience two very different and extremely intense moods. Sometimes it's a depressed mood and at other times it's the opposite, a manic mood. Our mood changes from extremely sad and hopeless to extremely high and irrational with more normal moods in between. The depression and mania can each last for days, weeks or even months.

About two million American adults have Bipolar Disorder. It usually begins in adolescence or early adulthood. It is a very serious illness that can result in the loss of jobs, friends and marriages. It can also lead to drug abuse and suicide.

Symptoms of Depression in Bipolar Disorder include:

- Intense sadness, hopelessness, and feeling of worthlessness
- Crying spells
 - Inability to experience joy or pleasure
- Problems concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling tired all the time
- An increase or decrease in sleeping and/or eating
- Thoughts of death and/or suicide

Symptoms of Mania in Bipolar Disorder include:

- Feeling high, excited and very important
- Having grandiose, unrealistic ideas
- Sleeping very little and not feeling tired
- Increased physical activity
- Irritability, distractibility and rage
- Speaking and thinking very fast
- Reckless behavior such as spending sprees, driving dangerously or provocative sexual behavior

What Causes Bipolar Disorder?

Researchers think it's a biological or genetic disorder that runs in families.. Hormones and a brain chemical called serotonin seem to be involved in Bipolar Disorder. It can be triggered by an upsetting life event or for no apparent reason.

How Can Bipolar Disorder Be Treated?

Bipolar Disorder can be treated successfully with medication and talking therapies or counseling. A combination of these two kinds of therapies is usually the most effective treatment for Bipolar Disorder.